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THE DECORATOR AND FURNISHER.

THE Italians can prepare colors as well and apply them in fresco where French and English fail, yet in wall paper hangings their designs are of the poorest, and their coloring of the most mediocre description; direct imitations of foreign wall paper patterns are better carried out. The explanation would seem to be that the artistic mind of Italy has not applied itself to this branch, otherwise in imitation frescoes and relief friezes the Italians could produce wall hangings of unrivalled beauty.

WHITE mahogany is exceedingly rare but we see it sparingly introduced as borders for tables and delicate frame work of upholstered suites. It has a soft enamel like gloss, and is very costly. Its successful use, however, suggests how much could be accomplished by a more general resort to white woods of hard grain neither stained nor polished and to the ornamental effects of which the veinings and figures absent in white mahogany might contribute.

NO lack of variety appears in this season's offerings for gifts, the contribution of world-wide distributed talent. Their close inspection by the public, and the many comparisons of relative merit this invites fosters and heightens general taste, and afford in many instances, suggestions for new combinations in home adornment.

A PIECE of furniture designed to occupy the corner of a room recalls by its frontage the ornate chests of former times, which were made articles of room decoration. The joints are clamped and from the hinges extend fancifully shaped bands of silvered steel. On touching a secret spring, an escritoire with all requisite appurtenances is revealed.

ONE of the pleasures arising out of gifts of room ornament at this season is that they afford occasion for the exercise of feminine ingenuity and taste in allotting them a position, the introduction of new colors themselves into an apartment necessitating frequently rearrangement of other articles. Although there is alleged to be some discord in the family of colors, the exercise of patience, judgment and taste will usually suffice to manage them.

HOW many tendencies of the mind does decoration appeal to? Among these is the love of contrast and variety, the admiration of due proportion in forms and colors, and symmetry in the separate portions of a design. Beauty in a design captures the feelings through sensation before it appeals to the mind.

THE character of Japanese gilding on porcelain may be best seen on some of their gigantic jars. It is evident that the leaf is applied of a thinness that admits of innumerable perforations, thus allowing the porcelain to gleam through, and so preventing the gilding, which would be otherwise excessive, from injuring the coloring by extreme contrast, as it thus shows with a somewhat pallid hue.

ANTIQUÉ CHINAWARE.

DECORATIVE arts that have declined have always reached their zenith of excellence in the middle period. This is illustrated in Chinese porcelain ware, which was never finer than in the days of the Ming dynasty, whence it steadily fell off. The means of distinguishing Chinese antique ware consists in the colors used, particularly in the color favored, often exclusively appropriated by each dynasty—the one deemed of richest quality being preferred, also the number of colors used and the degree of ornamentation applied, both which latter features increased as time went on; finally, the characteristics of the execution. Thus the intelligent collector need be at no loss. The description of the changes in ware are recorded in the imperial archives. It is an error to suppose that yellow has always been the imperial color. The present Tartar dynasty has affected it. The Ming dynasty (618-907) adopted a marvellous green, which has been described as of a depth to cause the beholder to forget the superfluities. The secret of the manufacture was lost with the overthrow of that dynasty. The ware under a former dynasty had a yellow beside which the best yellow of later times looks impure. The earliest porcelain examples extant (220-265) were extremely simple and included grey crackled ware; they showed but few colors. The yellow porcelain of the Thing dynasty (618-907) was poor in color, but the blue is of the highest value, and was reserved for the sovereigns of that line. The

porcelain produced about 954 far surpassed all that had preceded it, and included fine pieces of sky blue color. Then followed the production of extremely delicate and brilliant pale violet jars, but the acme of beauty of production was reached during the Ming dynasty, when the ornamentation, richer and more exquisite than ever, comprised red, blue, a marvellous green, a rose tint, and a golden yellow never since equalled. The decoration included roses, butterflies, birds, flower and fruit, music and reading books with the imperial dragon. With the fall of that dynasty came decadence. There was less boldness of design, less skill in arrangement, the colors were feeble and the outlines crude. The antique ware is regarded as ending in 1200, for what would be ancient to other nations is modern to the Chinese, who antedate even creation, some of their paintings representing them as coming out of the clouds.

HIGH ART IN OHIO.

THE town of Ada, Ohio, is famed for its Normal School, which is attended by several hundred students from all over the State, male and female. This college, as a matter of course, has a star literary society. Not long ago this association found the treasury contained a surplus, and in order to reduce it the decision was reached to purchase a fine piece of statuary, with which to adorn the hall of the society. Upon a vote being taken a choice was made of the statue of Apollo, the most graceful of the gods. None of the students had ever seen a statue of Apollo, but all agreed it was just what the society wanted, and the money for the purpose was voted from the treasury with pleasing unanimity.

An order was sent East for the piece of art, and in due course of time and express it arrived, securely boxed, and was taken to the hall to be opened and placed on exhibition. This was carefully done in the presence of the assembled and expectant students of both sexes. The large and handsome statue was lifted from the packing case, still covered by the customary drapery, and placed on the pedestal. When all was ready the drapery was drawn aside by the President of the society, a modest young lady. Then came the deluge. There were wild screams and a precipitate scattering of the students, who fled in all directions, leaving the god master of the situation. The students were not familiar with the nude in art.

The evening following the unveiling ceremony an anxious consultation was held by the gentlemen belonging to the society, and as it was deemed impossible and impolitic to return the statuary, it was decided after numerous suggestions had been voted down to resort to heroic measures. A committee was appointed to confer with the leading tailor in the town, and have that tradesman make a pair of fine velvet knee breeches, which was done; and when they were completed the famed Apollo was decently clothed with them; and there he stands, clad as no god was ever before adorned, a monument to the modesty and ingenuity of the students of Ada College.

BODY TONED COLORS IN TABLE AND OTHER DOMESTIC WARE.

WE have advanced far in giving artistic shapes to articles of utility, but in ordinary ceramic ware for the table and other domestic purposes a conspicuous defect would seem to lie in the general absence of body color. Whatever color ornamentation is introduced the field is usually white. As a consequence a table, as seen when laid with a china or quasi china service of white body, supplemented by a white table cloth, never fails to offer a chilly aspect. With delicate body toned colors, such as light pink, saffron or lavender, the general effect would be pleasing, and the color designs of borders and centers more attractive. The body color might be introduced into the ware or in the glaze, through which latter the substratum might be seen. In favor of this view we need not cite antique pottery, though it was all high toned in color, no white appearing on it; besides, the Greeks, however admirable their decorative ornamentation, had no great fertility in the use and adaptation of color, whilst the Romans chiefly adhered to deep red, using a rich porcelaneous glaze. More than a century ago, Wedgwood, the greatest of potters, deplored the necessity of changing the color of his ordinary ware from a fine body of pale sulphur to a dead white; for what he produced in the former had to be sent to the West Indies for sale. He compromised with pottery of dead white glaze, not like that now commonly in use, but low toned and proportionately unobtrusive. Possibly the present adhesion to white as a body color results from some association with the body coloring of common earthenware, but there is no danger in the wider extension of low toned body colors to finer ware of its quality not being apparent. We fairly believe that taste is so extended that manufacturers may fairly trust the public in taking a new departure.